



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Walla Walla District
201 North Third Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

Public Notice

PUBLIC NOTICE NO: CENWW-PM-PD-EC 13-01

Corps of Engineers Civil Works Action:

**LOWER SNAKE AND CLEARWATER RIVERS
Winter Maintenance Dredging 2013-2014
Washington and Idaho**

**PUBLIC NOTICE DATE: March 11, 2013
COMMENTS DUE DATE: April 11, 2013**

30-day Notice

Interested parties are hereby notified that the Walla Walla District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) proposes an activity that is subject to the provisions of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-217). The Clean Water Act requires that all civil works projects be evaluated as to the effect of discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States prior to making the discharge. The Corps is circulating this public notice in accordance with 33 CFR 335 "Operation and Maintenance of Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Project Involving the Discharge of Dredged or Fill Material into Water of the United States and Ocean Waters"; 33 CFR 336 "Factors to be Considered in Evaluation of Army Corps of Engineers Dredging Projects Involving the Discharge of Dredged Material into Waters of the United States and Ocean Waters"; 33 CFR 337 "Practice and Procedure"; and 33 CFR 338 "Other Corps Activities Involving the Discharge of Dredged or Fill Material into Waters of the United States"..

LOCATION: The Corps proposes to perform maintenance dredging activities at four locations in the Lower Granite and McNary Reservoirs on the lower Snake and Clearwater rivers in Washington and Idaho (Figure 1). Specific locations are listed below in Table 1:

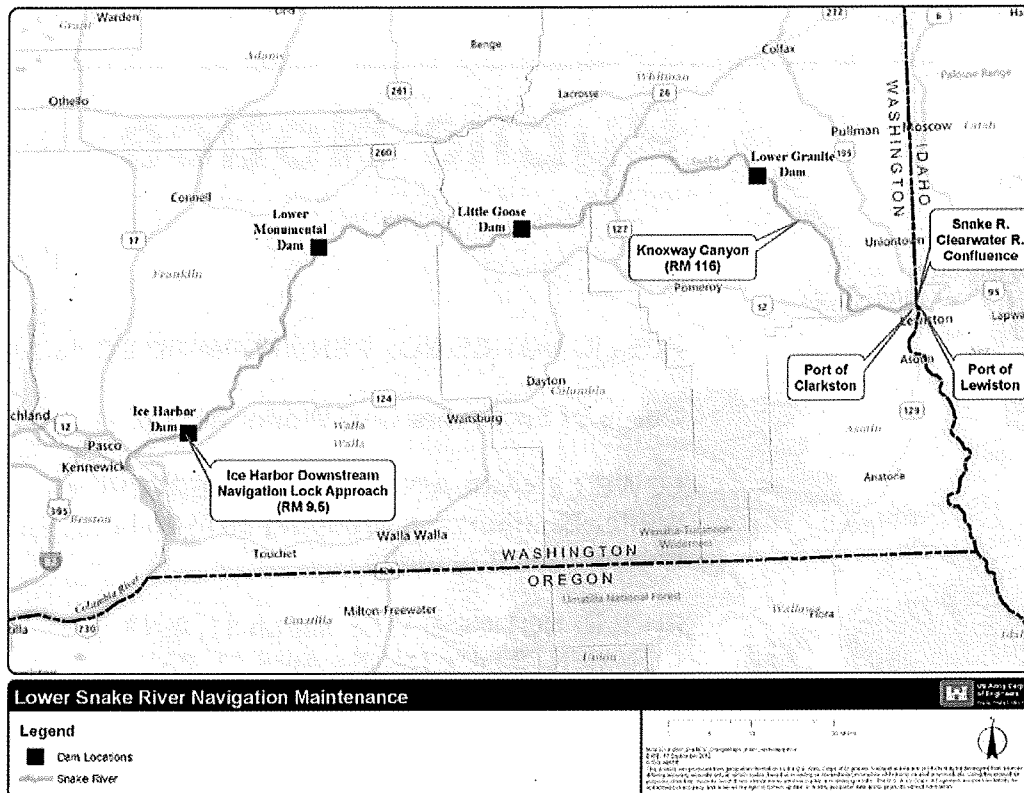


Figure 1. Location of proposed dredging and disposal sites.

Table 1 – Dredging sites, quantities of dredged material and sediment type

Site to be Dredged and River Mile (RM)	Quantity to be Dredged (cubic yards)	Sediment Type (calculated median amount)
Federal Navigation Channel at Confluence of Snake and Clearwater Rivers (Snake River RM 138 to Clearwater RM 2)	469,212	99% sand
Port of Clarkston (Snake RM 139)	14,143	90% sand, 10% silt
Port of Lewiston (Clearwater RM 1 – 1.5)	4,485	98% sand, 2% silt
Ice Harbor Navigation Lock Approach (Snake RM 9)	3,203	Rock and cobble greater than 2 inches in diameter
	Total 491,043	

Disposal of the dredged materials is proposed at an in-water location in Lower Granite Reservoir. The proposed discharge site is located at River Mile (RM) 116 near Knoxway Canyon on the left bank of the Snake River in Washington (Figures 1 and 2).

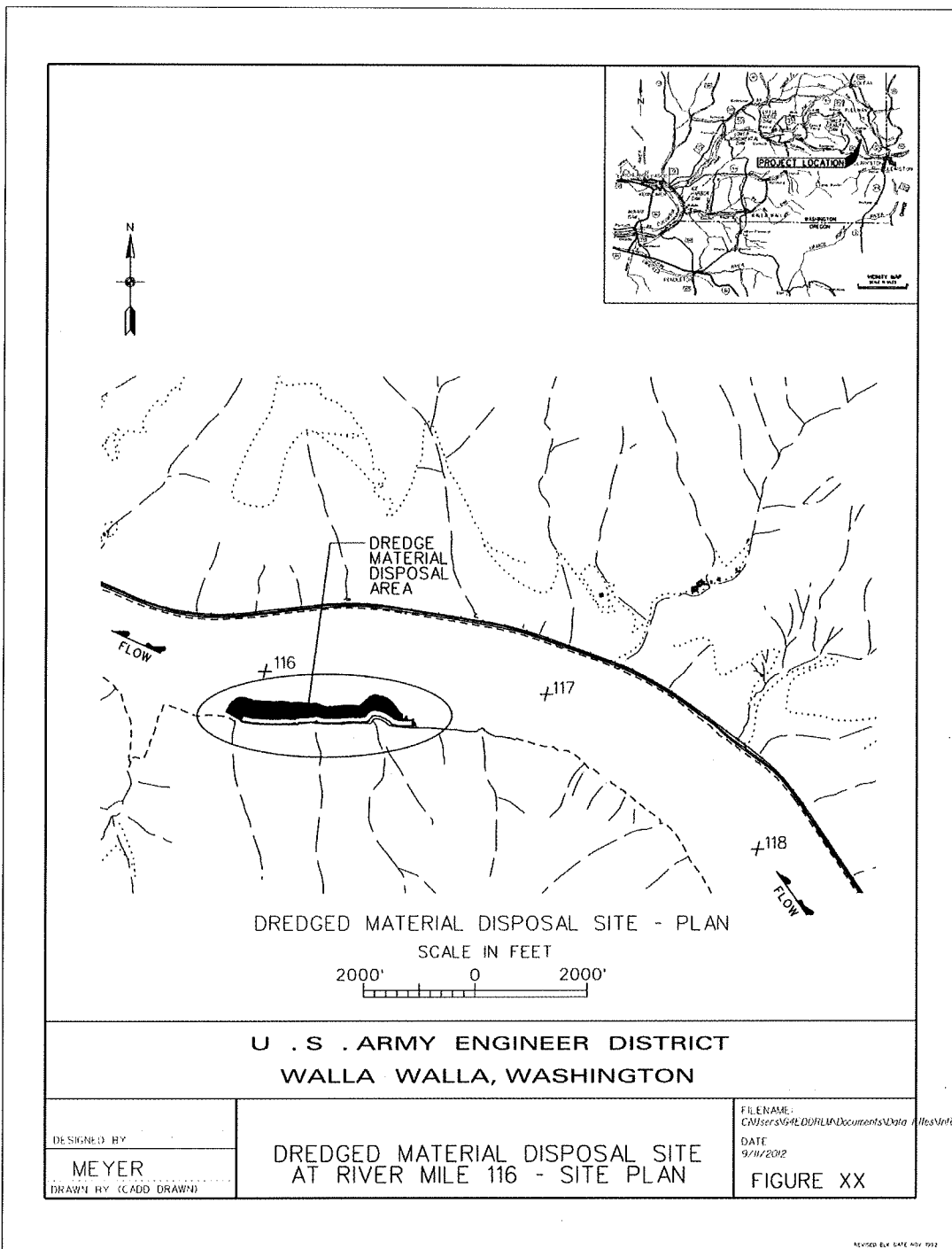


Figure 2. Location of disposal site at RM 116, just upstream of Knoxway Canyon.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The purpose of the maintenance dredging is to restore the authorized depth of the Federal navigation channel and to remove sediment from port areas. The Corps proposes to perform the dredging during the 2013 – 2014 winter in-water work window, which is currently identified as December 15 through March 1.

Dredging would be accomplished using mechanical methods such as clamshell, dragline, or backhoe. Based on previous dredging activities, the method to be used would likely be clamshell. Material would be scooped from the river bottom and loaded onto barges for transport to the disposal site.

DESCRIPTION OF DISPOSAL METHOD: The Corps plans to use the dredged material for beneficial use. This use is consistent with Corps policy to regulate the discharge of dredged material from its projects to assure that dredged material disposal occurs in the least costly, environmentally acceptable manner, consistent with engineering requirements established for the project. The Corps proposes to use in-water disposal to create shallow water habitat for juvenile salmon. The in-water disposal site at RM 116 was selected because it is on the inside of a river bend, has suitable water velocities and underwater contours to facilitate habitat creation, and is configured so the dredged material can be deposited without affecting known cultural resource sites. This site was previously used as a disposal site in the winter of 2005/2006 when the Corps placed about 340,000 cubic yards of dredged material at the upstream end of the site to create similar shallow water habitat (Figure 3). Disposal of dredged material at this site in 2013-2014 would be immediately downstream of the disposal location from 2005/2006 and would provide about 7.3 acres of shallow water habitat (Figure 4).

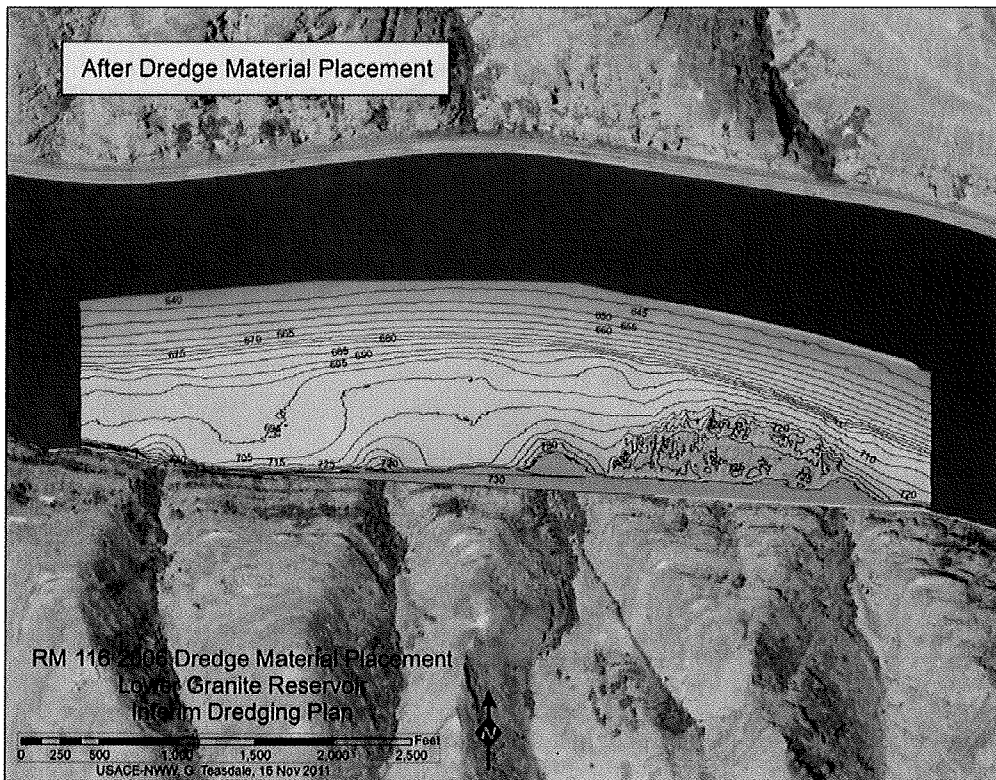


Figure 3. Map showing contours of RM 116 disposal site after previous disposal in 2005/2006. Material disposed in 2005/2006 is the orange area on the right.

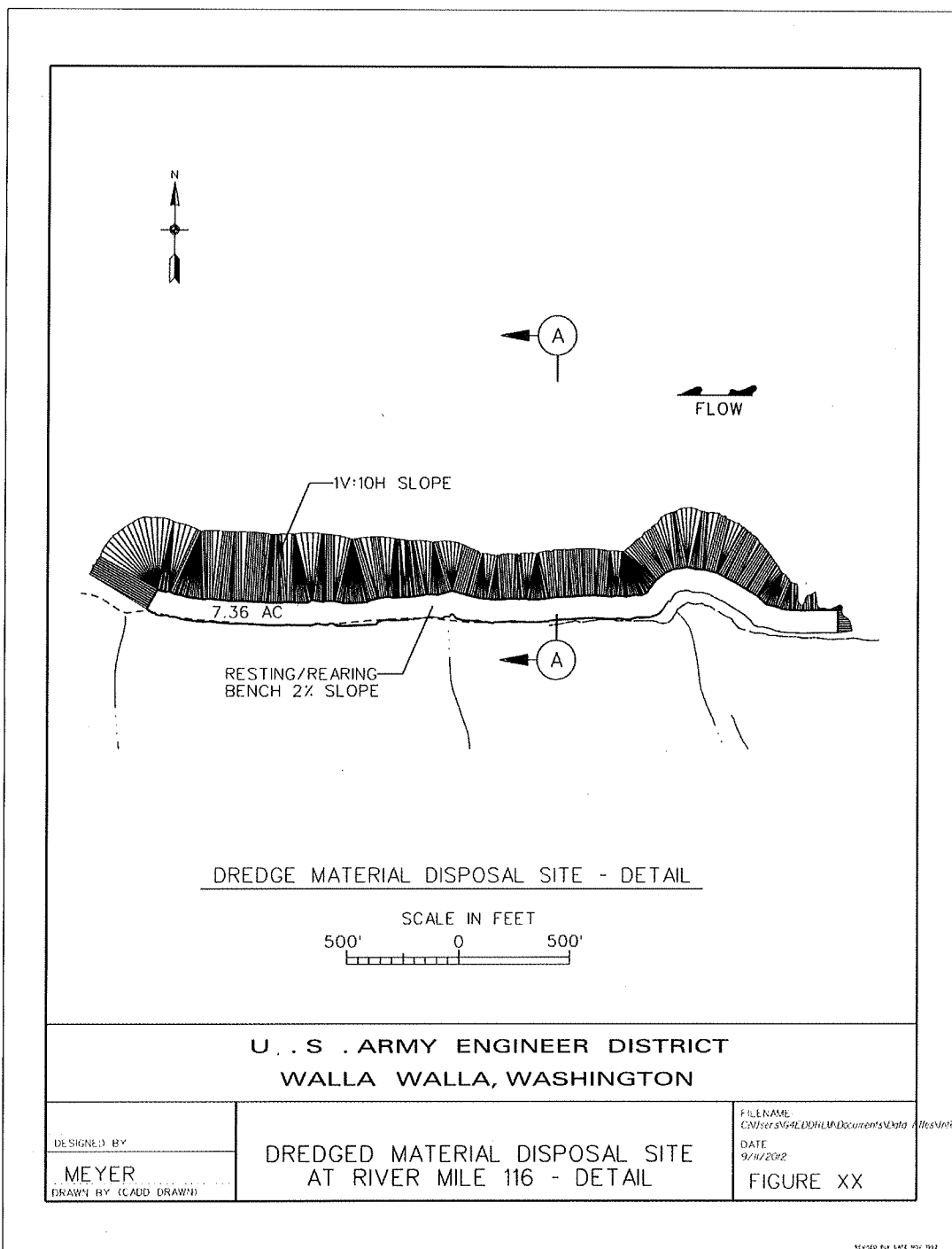


Figure 4. Plan view of disposal site after proposed placement of dredged material in 2013/2014.

Based on research efforts within the lower Snake River, shallow-water disposal of dredged material has successfully created resting and rearing habitat in the lower Snake River reservoirs for juvenile salmonids, primarily juvenile fall Chinook.

This research has shown that the use of dredged materials to create shallow-water habitat within the light-penetrating zone of shoreline areas has not adversely impacted salmonid species and after stabilization provides suitable salmonid rearing. Newly built shallow water areas were found to provide beneficial shallow water habitat for juvenile salmonids particularly natural subyearlings during the spring and summer (i.e., rearing fall Chinook), minimized the presence of predators at disposal sites, were at least as productive for invertebrates as compared to reference sites, and in general made the reservoir environment more hospitable for the Chinook salmon using it. Because subyearling fall Chinook salmon are shoreline oriented and transient during rearing, creating new habitat in narrow ribbons along the shoreline should provide the greatest benefit based on recent field observations and analysis of currently available Snake River fall Chinook habitat.

PLACEMENT METHODS: Placement of materials may occur using one of two methods: bottom dumping from hopper barges or dozing the material from flat deck barges.

Bottom dumping from hopper barges is the preferred placement method because it would result in the least release of turbidity and would be the most efficient, least expensive placement method. This method requires a water depth of about 8 to 10 feet, which can be a problem in shallow areas close to shore. One possible method to overcome water shallowness would be to bottom dump in deeper water and use a dragline or clamshell bucket to move the material into the desired position.

Dozing the dredged material from a flat deck barge would be similar to bottom dumping. Turbidity may be slightly higher than using a bottom dump barge for two reasons. First, material would be pushed off the barge deck in several masses compared to one mass from a bottom dump. This would allow greater contact of material with water. Second, material pushed off a flat deck barge would pass through more of the water column than a bottom dump barge. This is because material from a flat deck barge would be discharged at the surface of the reservoir while material discharged from a bottom dump barge would enter the water about 12 feet below the water surface. While water depth would still be an issue (about a 6 foot depth is required), the flat deck barge could reach shallower depths than a bottom dump barge. Moving the material a second time with a dragline or clamshell bucket would be an option for this method also.

PLACEMENT SCENARIO: The disposal process is dependent on the physical characteristics of the dredged material, as well as the potential to optimize the benefit for fish. Dredged materials would be composed of a mixture of silts, sands, gravels, and cobbles. Sediment samples have been taken from the areas to be dredged and have been evaluated for particle size, contaminant levels, and suitability for in-water disposal. Particle-size analysis identified the dredging sites or portions of sites that contain mostly silt, as well as the ones that contain mostly sand or coarser material. Based on previous experience, about 85 percent of the material is expected to be sands (grains greater than 0.0024 inch in diameter) and gravels and cobbles; while about 15 percent of the material is expected to be silts and finer-grained material.

The dredged material would be placed in steps. The first step would be to place the cobbles from the Ice Harbor lock approach either on the surface of the disposal site or along the outer edge of the planned footprint to form a berm.

This would be followed by placement of a mixture of the silt (less than 0.0024 inch in diameter), sand, and gravel/cobble, to fill the mid-depth portion of a site and form a base embankment. The dredged material would be transported by barge to the disposal area, where the material would be placed within the designated footprint. This footprint would be close to the shoreline; so that the river bottom could be raised to create an underwater shelf about 10 feet below the desired final grade (Figure 5). Because the barges may not be able to dump in the shallow depths, additional equipment would likely be needed to place or reshape the material to bring it up to the desired finished grade and slope. This may be accomplished by using equipment such as a clamshell bucket to move the material to meet the desired configuration.

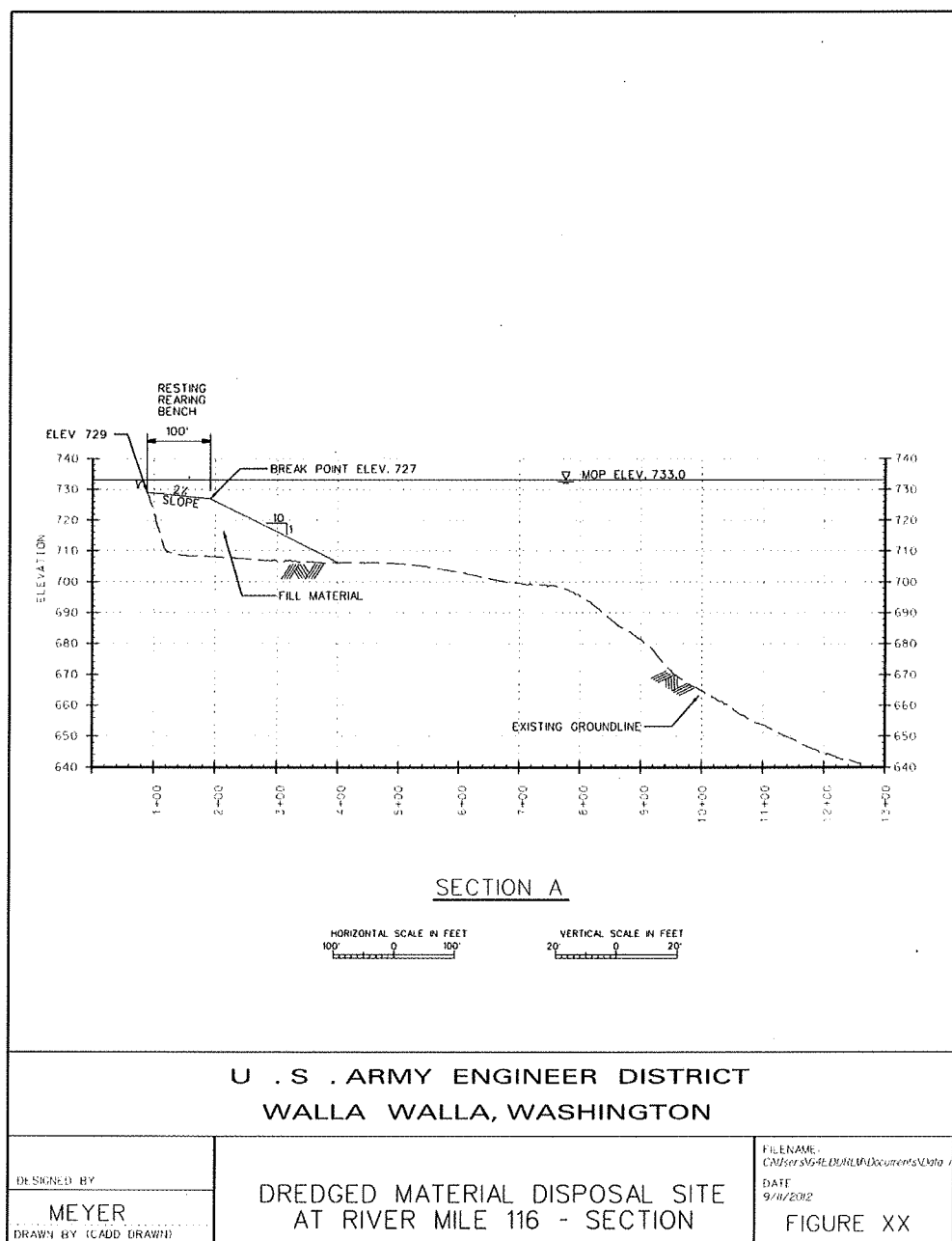


Figure 5. Cross-section of disposal site after proposed placement of dredged material in 2013/2014.

The final step would be to place sand on top of the sand/silt embankment. An area of sand would be reserved as the final area to be dredged during the dredging activity.

Sand would be placed on top of the base embankment in sufficient quantity to ensure that a layer of sand at least 10 feet thick covers the embankment once the final step of the process was completed. As described above, the sand would be placed using mechanical equipment. The sand cap layer needs to be at least 10 feet thick to ensure that the most desirable substrate (sand with limited fine-grained or silt material) is provided for salmonid-rearing habitat.

SEDIMENT TYPE: The RM 116 site is located in a low velocity area that has been accumulating sediment since the filling of Lower Granite reservoir at an estimated rate of 2 inches per year. The substrate at this site was visually inspected in 1992 during a reservoir drawdown test. The substrate was observed to be primarily silt. Approximately 4 feet of silt are estimated to cover the bottom of the existing mid- to shallow-depth bench. Sediment samples were collected from the proposed dredging sites in August 2011. The results of grain size analyses conducted on these samples are as follows.

- Sediment samples collected from the main navigation channel in the confluence area contained 90 to 100 percent sand and 0 to 10 percent fines. The navigation channel would provide over 96 percent of the material to be discharged.
- Sediment samples collected in 2011 from the cruise ship dock and grain elevator Port of Clarkston were comprised of 87 to 92 percent sand and 8 to 13 percent fines. The sediment core from the Crane Dock at the Port consisted of 59% sand, 37% gravel, and 4% silt.
- The Port of Lewiston sediment samples consisted of 89 to 99 percent sand and 1 to 11 percent silt.
- The downstream lock approach site at Ice Harbor consists of large rock substrate and cobbles greater than or equal to 2-inches.

The overall composition of the sediments to be dredged is expected to be less than 30 percent silt and includes materials suitable to provide improved substrate conditions for aquatic organisms.

The Corps performed testing of the sediment samples (level 2A as described in the 2009 *Regional Sediment Evaluation Framework for the Pacific Northwest*) and determined that some of the sediments did contain chemicals of concern, but not at concentrations that would require bioassay testing. The Corps determined that the sediments would be suitable for unconfined aquatic disposal.

COORDINATION WITH ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCIES: This activity is being coordinated with National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Washington Department of Ecology, and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT COMPLIANCE: The Corps' analysis of the environmental impacts associated with the proposed maintenance dredging activity is addressed in the Draft Lower Snake River Programmatic Sediment Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (PSMP/EIS) dated December 2012.

This document is currently out for public review and is available on the Corps website at www.nww.usace.army.mil/Missions/Projects/ProgrammaticSedimentManagementPlan.aspx.

The public comment period for the Draft PSMP/EIS ends March 26, 2013. The Corps anticipates signing a Record of Decision (ROD) in Fall 2013 and will not undertake the proposed action until the ROD has been signed. For additional information on the environmental analysis, please contact Ms. Sandy Shelin, Environmental Coordinator, at (509) 527-7265 or Mr. Richard Turner, Project Manager, at (509) 527-7625.

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION: This serves as public notice that the Corps has requested Washington Department of Ecology to certify that the discharges of dredged material will not violate existing state water quality standards. A copy of the Notice of Application is enclosed. Comments concerning certification for this project should be mailed to: Washington Department of Ecology, ATTN: Federal Permit Coordinator SEA Program, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, WA 98504-7600.

Comments may also be sent via e-mail to ecyrefedpermits@ecy.wa.gov.

The Corps does not need to request water quality certification from Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) as no dredged material would be discharged within the state of Idaho. However, the Corps is requesting a Short Term Activity Exemption from IDEQ for the proposed dredging action.

The Corps intends to monitor various water quality parameters during dredging and disposal activities to ensure that state water quality standards are being met. The monitoring plan is Appendix J of the Draft PSMP/EIS and can be viewed on the Corps Web site mentioned above.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: The Corps has made a determination of "No historic properties affected" for the proposed 2013-2014 dredging and disposal activities. The Corps is consulting with the Washington State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Idaho SHPO, and other consulting parties on this matter. The Corps would not implement the proposed dredging and disposal action until the consultation process is complete.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed threatened and endangered species that may be found in the project area can be divided into anadromous fish, non-anadromous fish, and terrestrial species. Of the four ESA-listed anadromous fish evolutionarily significant units present in the proposed dredging areas, one is listed as endangered (Snake River sockeye salmon) and three are listed as threatened (Snake River Fall Chinook salmon, Snake River Spring/Summer Chinook salmon, Snake River Basin steelhead).

In the project area, the following may also be present: one non-anadromous fish listed as threatened (bull trout); one terrestrial species listed as endangered (pygmy rabbit), and three terrestrial species listed as threatened (Canada lynx, Ute ladies' tresses, Spalding's silene).

The Corps prepared a Biological Assessment (Appendix K of the Draft PSMP/EIS) and has determined that the proposed dredging and disposal "may affect and would likely adversely affect" individuals of the three threatened anadromous fish species and the critical habitat of all four species of listed anadromous fish.

The Corps has entered into formal consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and anticipates receiving a Final Biological Opinion from NMFS in June 2013. The Corps would not implement the proposed dredging and disposal action until the consultation process is complete.

The Corps has also determined that the proposed dredging and disposal activities “may affect, and are likely to adversely affect” bull trout and their critical habitat, but would have “no effect” on pygmy rabbit, Canada lynx, Ute ladies’ tresses, or Spalding’s catchfly, or their habitats. The Corps has entered into formal consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and anticipates receiving a Final Biological Opinion from USFWS in June 2013. The Corps would not implement the proposed dredging and disposal action until the consultation process is complete.

EVALUATION FACTORS: The decision to perform the dredging and disposal as proposed will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact including cumulative impacts of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered including the cumulative effect thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, consideration of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

COMMENT AND REVIEW PERIOD: Interested parties are invited to provide their comments on the proposed activity. Please provide your comments to: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District, PSMP/EIS, ATTN: Sandra Shelin, CENWW-PM-PD-EC, 201 N. 3rd Avenue, Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876.

Comments should be postmarked no later than April 11, 2013 to ensure consideration.

Comments may also be provided via e-mail to psmp@usace.army.mil.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Should you need additional information or have any questions, please contact Ms. Sandy Shelin at (509) 527-7265 or Mr. Richard Turner at (509) 527-7625.

PUBLIC HEARING: Any person who has an interest that may be affected by the disposal of this dredged material may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the district engineer within the comment period of this notice and must clearly set forth the interest that may be affected and the manner in which the interest may be affected by this activity.

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Michael S. Francis
Chief, Environmental Compliance Section



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

*P.O. Box 47600 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7600
(360) 407-6000 • TDD Only (Hearing Impaired) (360) 407-6006*

**Notice of Application for
Water Quality Certification**

Date: March 11, 2013

Notice is hereby given that a request has been filed with the Department of Ecology, pursuant to the requirements of Section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act of 1977 (PL 95-217), to certify that the project described in Corps of Engineers Public Notice No. CENWW-PM-PD-EC 13-01 will comply with Sections 301, 302, 303, 306, and 307 of the Act, and with applicable provisions of State and Federal water pollution control laws.

Any person desiring to present views on the project pertaining to compliance with water pollution control laws may do so by providing written comments within 30 days of the above publication date to any of the following:

mail: Federal Permit Coordinator – SEA Program
Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

email: ecyrefedpermits@ecy.wa.gov

